

## AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS, AUSTRALIA, AUGUST 1992 PRELIMINARY

### MAIN FEATURES

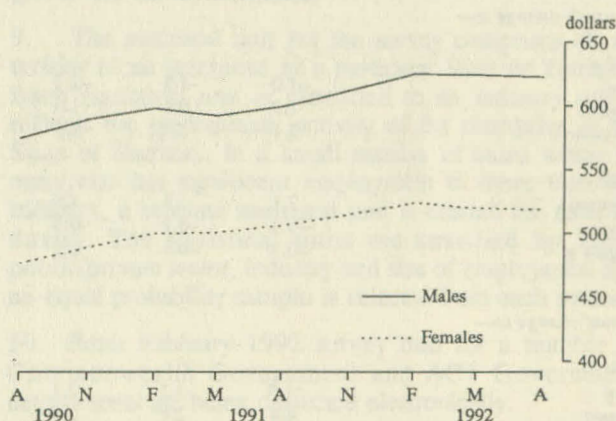
	Full-time adult average weekly ordinary time earnings			Full-time adult average weekly total earnings			All employees average weekly total earnings		
	Change (%)			Change (%)			Change (%)		
	May 1992 to (\$)	Aug. 1992	Aug. 1991 to Aug. 1992	May 1992 to (\$)	Aug. 1992	Aug. 1991 to Aug. 1992	May 1992 to (\$)	Aug. 1992	Aug. 1991 to Aug. 1992
Males	623.10	-0.3	+3.9	664.80	-0.1	+4.2	598.40	+0.2	+4.0
Females	518.40	-0.3	+2.4	529.70	-0.3	+2.3	397.20	+0.1	+3.4
Persons	585.70	-0.3	+3.2	616.50	-0.2	+3.3	504.30	0.0	+3.1

### Notes on the estimates

The movement in all categories of earnings between May 1992 and August 1992 at the National level are not statistically significant.

The compositional changes that have been taking place in the wage and salary earner segment of the labour force prior to the May 1992 quarter, producing upward movements in these series, appear to have stabilised.

AVERAGE WEEKLY ORDINARY TIME EARNINGS OF FULL-TIME  
ADULT EMPLOYEES, AUSTRALIA, AUGUST 1990 TO AUGUST 1992



The statistics of Average Weekly Earnings are compiled from data obtained from a sample survey of employers. Refer to paragraph 2 of the Explanatory Notes (page 3) for information regarding the sampling frame used by this survey. The survey sample has been redesigned this quarter to reflect changes in the register of businesses, from which the sample is selected. See paragraphs 3 and 11 of the Explanatory Notes (page 3).

Average weekly earnings statistics represent average gross (before tax) earnings of employees and do not relate to average award rates nor to the earnings of the 'average person'. Estimates of average weekly earnings are derived by dividing estimates of weekly total earnings by estimates of employment. Changes in the averages may be affected not only by changes in the level of earnings of employees but also by changes in the overall composition of the employed wage and salary earner segment of the labour force. There are several aspects which can contribute to compositional changes such as variations in the proportions of part-time, casual and junior employees, variations in the occupational distribution within and across industries and variations in the distribution of employment between industries.

IAN CASTLES  
Australian Statistician

### INQUIRIES

- for further information about statistics in this publication and the availability of related unpublished statistics, contact Errol Preston on Canberra (06) 252 6511 or Ann Soutar on Perth (09) 323 5304.
- for information about other ABS statistics and services please refer to the back page of this publication.



## AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS OF EMPLOYEES, AUSTRALIA

Reference period - pay period ending on or before	Males			Females			Persons		
	Full-time adults		All males	Full-time adults		All females	Full-time adults		All employees
	Ordinary time earnings	Total earnings	Total earnings	Ordinary time earnings	Total earnings	Total earnings	Ordinary time earnings	Total earnings	Total earnings
— dollars —									
1991—									
17 May	592.00	632.70	569.90	500.50	512.40	378.90	560.80	591.70	484.30
16 August	599.50	637.90	575.40	506.40	517.70	384.10	567.70	596.80	489.30
15 November	612.20	654.20	589.70	514.80	527.40	393.20	578.80	610.70	501.30
1992—									
21 February	625.20	666.00	598.90	523.90	535.50	400.90	589.20	619.70	507.90
15 May	624.80	665.50	597.40	519.70	531.20	397.00	587.30	617.60	504.50
21 August p	623.10	664.80	598.40	518.40	529.70	397.20	585.70	616.50	504.30
Standard errors (a)—									
1992—									
August									
Level p	4.50	4.70	5.00	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.80	4.00
Change (quarterly) p	4.30	4.50	4.90	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.60	3.60	4.00
Percentage changes:									
— per cent —									
Quarterly change to—									
1991—									
May	-1.0	-1.5	-2.7	0.1	0.1	-1.8	-0.6	-1.0	-2.5
August	1.3	0.8	1.0	1.2	1.0	1.4	1.2	0.9	1.0
November	2.1	2.6	2.5	1.6	1.9	2.4	2.0	2.3	2.4
1992—									
February	2.1	1.8	1.6	1.8	1.5	2.0	1.8	1.5	1.3
May	-0.1	-0.1	-0.3	-0.8	-0.8	-1.0	-0.3	-0.3	-0.7
August p	-0.3	-0.1	0.2	-0.3	-0.3	0.1	-0.3	-0.2	0.0
Annual change to—									
1991—									
May	4.5	3.2	2.5	6.4	6.1	4.7	5.0	3.9	3.0
August	4.4	2.9	2.3	6.3	5.9	5.2	4.9	3.7	3.1
November	3.9	2.9	2.0	5.3	5.2	4.1	4.2	3.4	2.2
1992—									
February	4.6	3.7	2.3	4.8	4.6	4.0	4.4	3.7	2.2
May	5.5	5.2	4.8	3.8	3.7	4.8	4.7	4.4	4.2
August p	3.9	4.2	4.0	2.4	2.3	3.4	3.2	3.3	3.1

(a) See paragraphs 15 to 19 of the Explanatory Notes.



## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### Introduction

This publication contains preliminary estimates of average weekly earnings for August 1992 based on information obtained from a sample survey of employers. Final estimates will be published in *Average Weekly Earnings, States and Australia, August 1992* (6302.0).

### Coverage adjustment

2. This survey uses as its sampling frame the ABS's register of businesses which is regularly updated to take account of new businesses and businesses ceasing operation. A major source of information on new businesses is group employer (GE) registrations with the Australian Tax Office. The ABS has developed an improved computerised system which reduces the delay in new businesses from this source being recorded on the register and has completed an analysis to identify businesses which have been omitted from the register in the past. From the May 1991 survey these updates have been implemented. Assessments of the improvements to the register have revealed that the effects on the estimates of average weekly earnings are minor and not statistically significant. Therefore no revisions to previously published data have been made.

3. An analysis by the ABS has identified those businesses which were included on the register but had actually ceased operations. These businesses have now been removed from the population frame for this survey.

4. Background information about the average weekly earnings series is provided in *Information Paper: New Statistical Series: Employment, Average Weekly Earnings, Job Vacancies and Overtime* (6256.0) published on 21 June 1984, copies of which are available on request.

### Scope of the survey

5. All wage and salary earners who received pay for the reference period are represented in the survey, except:

- members of the Australian permanent defence forces;
- employees of enterprises primarily engaged in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting;
- employees in private households employing staff;
- employees of overseas embassies, consulates, etc.;
- employees based outside Australia; and
- employees on workers' compensation who are not paid through the payroll.

6. Also excluded are the following persons who are not regarded as employees for the purposes of this survey:

- directors who are not paid a salary;
- proprietors/partners of unincorporated businesses; and
- self-employed persons such as subcontractors, owner/drivers, consultants and persons paid solely by commission without a retainer.

### Survey design

7. A sample of approximately 5,000 employers is selected from the ABS register of businesses to ensure adequate State and industry representation. The sample is updated each quarter to reflect changes in the ABS register of business units. These changes arise from the emergence of new businesses, takeovers and mergers, changes to industry classification, changes in the number of employees, and businesses which have ceased operations. Such updating of the register can contribute to changes in the estimates of average weekly earnings.

8. Recently the ABS has introduced new definitions and rules for recording units on the register with greater emphasis being given to the way organisations are structured and the type of data available from businesses' accounts. These changes should reduce respondent load and lead to improved data quality. In order to correctly apply these new rules, the ABS is undertaking a program of visits to the largest private and public sector organisations in Australia to obtain up to date information on their structure and operations. The outcome of these visits and the adoption of new units definitions may result in changes in the survey estimates.

9. The statistical unit for the survey comprises all activities of an enterprise in a particular State or Territory. Each statistical unit is classified to an industry which reflects the predominant activity of the enterprise in the State or Territory. In a small number of cases where an enterprise has significant employment in more than one industry, a separate statistical unit is created for each industry. The statistical units are stratified by State, public/private sector, industry and size of employment and an equal probability sample is selected from each stratum.

10. From February 1992 survey data for a number of Commonwealth Government and ACT Government departments are being collected electronically.

11. Changes to the sample design this quarter and the effects of improvements to the ABS register of businesses have had minor effects on the estimation of average weekly earnings for this quarter.

### Comparability of results

12. When comparisons are made between period to period movements in average weekly ordinary time earnings (AWOTE) for full-time adults and movements in the Award Rates of Pay Indexes (ARPI) it is important to recognise the different coverage, scope, definitions and methodology used in the construction of each series. In particular, the AWOTE series includes a number of payments additional to award rates of pay used in compiling ARPI. Allowances covered under awards which are not industry or occupation wide in their application such as site, travelling, height and dirt allowances are excluded from ARPI but included in AWOTE. The AWOTE series also includes other payments, such as shift penalty payments and overaward pay. A significant number of employees are not covered by awards but are included in AWOTE. The AWOTE series is affected by composition-



al change in the labour force. However ARPI is not, because it is a fixed-weight index constructed from a representative 'basket' of occupations selected from the May 1985 Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours and subject to reselection and rebasing at infrequent intervals. Other factors affecting comparisons of the two series include seasonal influences on earnings and differences between the two series in the treatment of retrospective pay increases. A detailed description of the methodology, scope and definitions used in ARPI is published in *Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Australia* (6312.0).

13. It is also important to recognise that whilst average employee earnings can be derived from the Survey of Employment and Earnings (SEE) published in *Employed Wage and Salary Earners, Australia* (6248.0), these average earnings will not be comparable with those produced from the Survey of Average Weekly Earnings (AWE). In the AWE survey, information is obtained relating to a specified pay period, the last pay period ending on or before the third Friday of the middle month of the calendar quarter. The SEE collects the sum of employee earnings paid in *all* pay periods ending in a calendar quarter including payments to employees which are excluded from the scope of the AWE survey such as retrospective pay, pay in advance, leave loadings and severance, termination and redundancy payments. Whilst the quarterly earnings produced by the SEE are affected by the varying number of pay periods from quarter to quarter the AWE results are unaffected because of the selection of a specified pay period in the middle of a quarter. The SEE earnings data are also more subject to seasonal variations, particularly in the December and March quarters, due to the incidence of holidays taken in January being paid in advance and the earnings being reported in December quarter figures.

#### Historical series

14. The series was introduced in August 1981 when it replaced the average weekly earnings series based principally on information from payroll tax returns. Revised estimates of average weekly earnings for the period August 1981 to November 1983 were included in *Average Weekly Earnings, States and Australia, March Quarter 1984* (6302.0) published on 12 July 1984. Users who need a measure of the movement in earnings for a period which spans both the payroll tax based and employer survey series should refer to Table 3 in that publication which presents both series linked to a common index base (August 1981 = 100).

#### Reliability of estimates

15. As the estimates in this publication are based on information relating to a sample of employers rather than a full enumeration, they are subject to sampling variability. That is, they may differ from the estimates that would have been produced if the information had been obtained from all employers. This difference, called *sampling error*, should not be confused with inaccuracy that may occur because of imperfections in reporting by respondents or in processing by the ABS. Such inaccuracy is referred to as *non-sampling error* and may occur in any enumeration whether it be a full count or sample. Efforts have been made to reduce non-sampling error by careful

design of questionnaires, detailed checking of returns and quality control of processing.

16. The sampling error associated with any estimate can be estimated from the sample results. One measure of sampling error is given by the *standard error* which indicates the degree to which an estimate may vary from the value that would have been obtained from a full enumeration (the 'true' figure). There are about two chances in three that a sample estimate differs from the true value by less than one standard error, and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two standard errors.

17. An example of the use of a standard error is as follows. If the estimated average earnings was \$500.00 with a standard error of \$4.00, then there would be about two chances in three that a full enumeration would have given an estimate in the range \$496.00 to \$504.00 and about nineteen chances in twenty that it would be in the range \$492.00 to \$508.00.

18. An example of the use of a standard error for a quarterly change estimate is as follows. If the estimated standard error for a quarterly change estimate of average weekly earnings was \$1.00 and the quarterly change estimate between two quarters was \$1.50, then there would be about two chances in three that a full enumeration would have given a quarterly change estimate in the range +\$0.50 to +\$2.50 and about nineteen chances in twenty that it would be in the range -\$0.50 to +\$3.50.

19. Quarterly movements in estimates of average weekly earnings are considered to be statistically significant where they exceed two standard errors.

#### Related publications

20. Users may also wish to refer to the following publications which are available on request:

*Average Weekly Earnings, States and Australia* (6302.0)—issued quarterly

*Average Weekly Earnings of Employees, Australia* (6304.0)—issued annually

*Distribution and Composition of Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia* (6306.0)—issued annually

*Job Vacancies and Overtime, Australia* (6354.0)—issued quarterly

*Employed Wage and Salary Earners, Australia* (6248.0)—issued quarterly

*Information Paper: New Statistical Series: Employment, Average Weekly Earnings, Job Vacancies and Overtime* (6256.0)—issued June 1984

*Average Weekly Earnings, Australia 1941-1990* (6350.0)—issued February 1992

Occasional Paper No. 1986/1: *Statistics on Wages, Earnings, Income and Labour Costs—A Guide to Their Concepts, Measurement and Usage*

*Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Australia* (6312.0)—issued monthly

*The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0)—issued monthly.



*Labour Force Projections, Australia 1992-2005 (6260.0)*

21. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications and Products, Australia* (1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Publications Advice* (1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Publications Advice are available from any ABS office.

**Unpublished statistics**

22. In some cases, the ABS can also make available information which is not published. This information may be made available in one or more of the following forms: microfiche, photocopy, data tape, floppy disk, computer printout or clerically extracted tabulation. Generally, a charge is made for providing unpublished information. Inquiries should be made to the contact officer or Information Services in the nearest ABS office.

**Symbols and other usages**

p preliminary

23. The estimates of average weekly earnings are rounded to the nearest 10 cents.

24. Percentage changes are calculated on the actual values and may differ from calculations based on rounded estimates.

**Forthcoming Issues**

25. The following table shows the dates on which catalogue numbers 6301.0 and 6302.0 are expected to be released.

	ISSUE	EXPECTED RELEASE DATE
1992	August 6302.0 (States and Australia)	2 December 1992
1992	November 6301.0 (Australia, Preliminary)	11 February 1993
1992	November 6302.0 (States and Australia)	4 March 1993